



NEWS RELEASE

PRESS OFFICE

Release Date: May 20, 2004

Release Number: 2004-07

Contact: Debra.Dillon@sba.gov

Internet Address: www.sba.gov/ct

Meriden Resident Receives Top Honors from the SBA for His Service and Dedication to Others

Hartford--Rafael Collazo, Hispanic Business Education and Outreach Coordinator for the University of Connecticut Small Business Development Center (CSBDC) was named the Minority Small Business Advocate by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) for both the State and the Region.

Rafael, a resident of Meriden since 1952, is awarded for his dedication to helping minorities in the inner city districts of Connecticut's major cities achieve success through business ownership. Rafael devotes his professional and personal time to improving and enhancing opportunities for the Hispanic and Latino population in his community and beyond.

When Rafael joined CSBDC five years ago the organization was struggling to create an entrepreneurship training program that would meet the needs of Connecticut's Hispanic community. Rafael took this opportunity to help to successfully build a program that is now recognized as a national model for Hispanic Entrepreneurship Training. Currently, there is a waiting list of requests from municipal economic development officials and Hispanic organizations for the program to be offered in their area.

He believes wholeheartedly that his mission is to help empower individuals through economic development, and he is passionate about fulfilling his goal. His favorite saying is, "You give a man a fish and you have fed him for a day. But you teach a man how to fish, and you have fed him for a lifetime." Living by this parable drives Rafael in his tireless efforts of reaching out to others.

Rafael also finds time to serve as a volunteer on numerous community organizations and boards, and was recently elected vice-chairperson of the Connecticut Chapter of the National Republican Hispanic Congress.

The SBA annually recognizes individuals and businesses for their experience, expertise and devotion to their professional and personal lives to bettering the small business environment. This recognition is made in conjunction with the nationally celebrated Small Business Week in Orlando, Florida during SBA Expo '04 held May 19-21.

Rafael and all SBW 2004 award recipients will be honored on Thursday, June 3, 2004 at The Belvedere (formerly Septembers), in New Haven, CT. If you would like more information on this event, or next year's nominations contact Debra Dillon at (860) 240-4700 ext. 242.

A complete list of the 2004 Small Business Week award recipients is attached.

###

2004 SMALL BUSINESS WEEK AWARD WINNERS

Small Business Person of the Year

Lesley Mills

Griswold Special Care

New Haven, Hartford, Waterbury, Meriden, New London, CT

Nominated by

Richard Blumenthal, Attorney General

State of Connecticut

REGIONAL AWARD WINNERS

Minority Small Business Advocate
of the Year

Rafael Collazo

CT Small Bus. Development Center
Hartford, CT

Nominated by

Zaiga L. Antonetti

CT Small Bus. Development Center

Women in Business Advocate
of the Year

Barbara Potopowicz

Perm. Comm. on the Status of Women
Hartford, CT

Nominated by

Rose E. Bednarz

Gateway Community College

Small Business Journalist
of the Year

Mitchell Young

Business New Haven
New Haven, CT

Nominated by

Rose E. Bednarz

Gateway Community College

DISTRICT AWARD WINNERS

Veteran Small Business
Advocate of the Year

Charles C. Young

CT Department of Labor
New London, CT

Nominated by

Lou Kennedy

US Department of Labor

Financial Services Advocate
of the Year

Edward E. Cull

Citizens Bank Connecticut
Middletown, CT

Nominated by

John Rosevear

Citizens Financial Group

Small Business Exporter
of the Year

Raymond Browne

David Monighetti

Wyrepak Industries, Inc.
Middletown, CT

Nominated by

Sandra K. Weber

Hudson United Bank